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THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

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Few chapters of history are more interesting than those which describe the progress of British colonization. They record scenes of as thrilling adventure, of as sublime daring, of as heroic valor as any ever witnessed on earth. The settlement of the Red River of the North is no exception to these remarks.

At the beginning of the present century the trade of the great fur-producing regions of the north and north-west was divided between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies. Between those companies an intense and bitter rivalry existed—a rivalry that could be appeased only by the destruction of one of the other. About this time, Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, was the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was a man of indomitable energy, and of dauntless intrepidity. With the skill of an experienced general, he prepared for the inevitable conflict. He perceived that by obtaining control of the Red River, he would have a strong basis for future operations, and thus possess great advantages over his antagonists. For this purpose, he resolved to establish a colony of his countrymen in that important strategic point. The offer of free grants of one hundred acres of land each, and of the continuance of their civil rights and religious privileges—the latter an important consideration with a true North Briton—induced a large number of hardy Highlanders to seek their fortunes in the North-west.

In the year 1812, the first brigade of the colonists reached Red River. A stern welcome awaited them. Hardly had they arrived, when an armed band of North-westerns, painted and plumed in the Indian style, appeared upon the ground, and by their significant gestures (for their language was unknown) warned the colonists to depart. The latter were compelled, not only to submit, but to purchase, by the sacrifice

of their arms and trinkets, the services of their conquerors as guides to the town of Pembina, within the territory of the United States.

Undaunted by this failure, they returned in the spring to the Red River, built log-houses, and sowed their seed. They were undisturbed till the following year. By this time the decree had gone forth from the Councils of the North-West Company, *Delenda est Carthago*—the colony must be exterminated. It was done, but not without shedding of blood. The flourishing settlement became a heap of ashes, its inhabitants exiles in the wilderness.

Reinforced by a new brigade from Scotland, the banished settlers returned to their ruined homes. Many hardships ensued. Desertions became so numerous that the very existence of the colony was perilled. But in June, 1816, there fell upon it a more crushing blow than any that it had yet received. A body of three hundred mounted North-Westerns, armed to the teeth, and begrimed with war-paint, attacked the settlement. A little band of twenty-eight men went forth to parley. Twenty-one of them were slain, the settlement sacked and burned, and the colonists hunted from their own hearths like beasts of prey.

Hereupon Lord Selkirk assumed the offensive. With a battalion of Swiss mercenaries, whom he had brought from Europe, he marched against the head-quarters of the rival company at Fort William, on Lake Superior, which stronghold he captured, and then, nothing discouraged, led the exiles back to the thrice-forsaken colony, which he re-established on a new and solid basis, advancing agricultural implements, seed, grain, and stock. But the summer was already half gone. The harvest was scanty, famine was impending, and the hapless colonists fled southward to Pembina at the approach of winter. Their hardships were incredible. They were forced to subsist upon the precarious products of the chase. They suffered everything but death, and were reduced to the uttermost extremity.

"O that long and dreary winter!
O the cold and cruel winter!
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker,
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper,
Fell the snow on all the landscape,
All the earth was sick and famished.

Hungry was the air about them.
Hungry was the sky above them,
And the hungry stars in heaven,
Like the eyes of wolves, glared at them."

But even such a winter as this must pass, and in the spring the colonists returned for a fifth time to their abandoned habitations. Fortune seemed, at last, to smile upon their efforts. The crops were ripening around the little settlement. Hope beat high in every heart. But an unforeseen catastrophe awaited them. A cloud of grasshoppers, like the Egyptian plague of locusts, darkened the air and covered the ground, and in a single night devoured every green thing. Strong men bowed themselves. The sturdy Highlanders, who had gazed undismayed upon the face of death, wept as they thought of the inevitable sufferings of their wives and little ones. Another weary march, and a miserable winter at Pembina was their fate.

Again, in the spring, that forlorn hope returned to their devastated fields. But agriculture was impossible. The larvæ of the previous season multiplied the grasshoppers a thousand-fold. They covered the ground, they filled the air, they polluted the water, they put out the fires in the fields with their numbers. The effluvia of their dead bodies infested the atmosphere. Pembina must succour the hapless colonists yet another winter.

The story of their mishaps becomes wearisome. Anyone less determined, say less dogged, if you will, than Lord Selkirk, would have abandoned the colony for ever. Not so he. His resolution rose with the difficulties of the occasion, and surmounted every obstacle. He led back his little company—those advance skirmishers of the great army of civilization—to the scene of their blasted hopes. He bought two hundred and fifty bushels of seed wheat from Missouri, a distance of twelve hundred

miles, at a cost of \$5,000. It was sown, and, by the divine blessing, after eight years of failure, the harvest was happily reaped.

The colony now struck its roots deep into the soil. It grew and flourished. Recruits came from Scotland, Germany, Switzerland. They suffered many privations, and encountered some disasters, but none worse than those of the winter of 1825-6. It was a season of unprecedented severity. Thirty-three persons perished with hunger and cold, and many cattle died. With the spring thaw, the river rose nine feet in a single day. For three days every house had to be abandoned. The inhabitants fled to the hills. They beheld their houses, barns, crops, fences—everything they possessed—swept on the rushing torrent to Lake Winnipeg. The waters continued to rise for nineteen days. The disheartened colonists proposed abandoning for ever the luckless settlement. At this crisis, tidings of the abatement of the flood was brought. They rushed *en masse* to the water side. It was indeed so. They accepted the deliverance as from God. They resolved to remain where they were. A new beginning had again to be made; every trace of the settlement had disappeared.

Since then, no serious drawback to the prosperity of the settlement has occurred, although it has experienced many fluctuations.

The want of an outlet for their surplus produce led to some ill-advised manufacturing speculations. Among other visionary schemes, was one to manufacture cloth from the wool of the buffalo. A huge factory was erected, and machinery and workmen imported from England. Results—a grand failure. The cloth cost far more than it would sell for. A sheep's wool company was then formed. Fifteen thousand sheep were purchased in Kentucky, two thousand miles away. So severe was the journey, that only two hundred and fifty-one reached Red River, and these soon died of exhaustion.

A flax manufacturing company and a

tallow exportation company were also successively formed and abandoned.

In planting this remote colony, Lord Selkirk expended nearly half a million of dollars, and in promoting these various schemes for its advancement, the Hudson's Bay Company has sunk a vast amount more. However the control of that gigantic monopoly may have retarded the ultimate development of the North-West territory, certainly it has done much to plant the germs of civilization, not only at the Red River, but at their numerous forts, factories, and trading stations, from Labrador to Puget's Sound.

It is a matter of congratulation, that this now flourishing little colony, in the planting and maintenance of which so much of British energy and British capital has been expended, will probably be soon annexed to this New Dominion. It were a disaster and a disgrace were it to pass into the possession of a foreign power. It holds the key of Trans-American travel through the British possessions, and in the hands of another would cut us off for ever from all free communication with the magnificent territory of the Saskatchewan, and the flourishing colonies of the Pacific coast. That in the vast and fertile regions of the North-West may be perpetuated for ever the constitutional liberties and religious privileges which, as British subjects, we to-day enjoy, and that on their boundless prairies and mountain slopes millions yet unborn may dwell in peace and prosperity, beneath the sheltering fold of the broad, free banner of England, is the devout aspiration of every patriotic Canadian.

I cannot close this paper without casting a thought into the future, as men drop pebbles into deep wells, to hear what echo they return. I behold in imagination a grand Confederation of States, stretching from ocean to ocean, watered by the grandest lake and river system in the world, and presided over, it may be, by a descendant of the august lady who to-day graces the most stable throne on earth!

At the rate of increase of the past cen-

tury, by the year 1968, a hundred millions of inhabitants shall occupy these lands. I behold a new England, built up by British enterprise and industry, washed by the Pacific Sea, and rejuvenating the effete old nations of China and Japan. A ceaseless stream of traffic flowing along the iron arteries of commerce, that throb across the continent, shall realize the dream of Columbus, of a Western passage to the "gorgeous Inde and far Cathay." Great cities, renowned as marts of trade throughout the world, stand thick along this highway of the nations, and at its Eastern terminus, at the head of ocean navigation, the City of the Royal Mount, I foresee enjoying a degree of commercial prosperity such as her heartiest well-wisher hardly dares to imagine; and the names of her merchant princes shall be familiar as household words in the bazaars of Yokohama and Jeddo, of Peking and Shanghai.

When this vision shall be realized, the little colony whose fortunes, or rather misfortunes, we have been narrating, shall, as the Half-way-house across the Continent, and *entrepôt* of the riches of the East and West, forget the mishaps of her early history.*

WINSTANLEY.

BY JEAN INGELOW.

Winstanley's deed, you kindly folk
With it I fill my lay,
And a nobler man ne'er walked the earth,
Let his name be what it may.

The good ship "Snowdrop" tarried long,
Up at the vane looked he;
"Belike," he said, for the wind had dropped,
"She lieth becalmed at sea."

The lovely ladies flocked within,
And still would each one say,
"Good mercer, be the ships come up?"
But still he answered "Nay."

Then stepped two mariners down the street,
With looks of grief and fear;
"Now, if Winstanley be your name,
We bring you evil cheer!"

"For the good ship 'Snowdrop' struck—she
struck
On the rock—the Eddystone,
And down she went with three-score men,
We two being left alone.

* For further details of that history, see Ross's account of the Red River Settlement, from which many of the data of the present paper are derived.

"Down in the deep, with freight and crew,
Past any help she lies,
And never a bale has come to shore,
Of all thy merchandise."

"For cloth of gold and comely frieze,"
Winstanley said, and sighed,
"For velvet colf, or costly coat,
They fathoms deep may bide."

"O, thou brave skipper, blithe and kind
O, mariners, bold and true,
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
A-thinking of yours and you."

"Many long days Winstanley's breast
Shall feel a weight within,
For a waft of wind he shall be 'feared,
And trading count but sin."

"To him no more it shall be joy
To pace the cheerful town,
And see the lovely ladies gay
Step on in velvet gown."

The "Snowdrop" sunk at Lammas tide,
All under the yeasty spray;
On Christmas Eve the brig "Content"
Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,
So jolly as he sat then,
While drank the toast and praised the roast
The round-faced Aldermen;

While serving-lads ran to and fro,
Pouring the ruby wine,
And jellies trembled on the board,
And towering pasties fine;

While loud huzzas ran up the roof,
Till the lamps did rock o'erhead,
And holly boughs from rafters hung
Dropped down their berries red;

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,
With every rising tide,
How the wave washed in his sailor-lads
And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board—
"Now, stranger, who be ye?"
He looked to right, he looked to left,
And "Rest you merry," quoth he;

"For you did not see the brig go down,
Or ever a storm had blown;
For you did not see the white wave rear
At the rock—the Eddystone."

"She drove at the rock with sternsails set;
Crash went the masts in twain;
She staggered back with her mortal blow,
Then leaped at it again."

"There rose a great cry, bitter and strong—
The misty moon looked out—
And the water swarmed with seamen's heads,
And the wreck was strewn about."

"I saw her mainsail lash the sea,
As I clung to the rock alone;
Then she heeled over, and down she went,
And sank like any stone."

"She was a fair ship, but all's one!
For naught could stand the shock."
"I will take horse," Winstanley said,
"And see this deadly rock."

"For never again shall bark of mine
Sail over the windy sea,
Unless, by the blessing of God, for this
Be found a remedy."

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town
All in the sleet and snow,

And he looked around on shore and sound,
As he stood on Plymouth Hoe.

Till a pillar of spray rose, far away,
And shot up its stately head,
Reared and fell over, and reared again;
"Tis the rock! the rock!" he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way—
"Good Master Mayor," quoth he,
"I am a mercer of London town,
And owner of vessels three;

"But for your rock of dark renown,
I had five to track the main."
"You are one of many," the old Mayor said,
"That of the rock complain."

"An ill rock, mercer! your words ring right,
Well with my thoughts they chime,
For my two sons to the world to come
It sent before their time."

"Lend me a lighter, good Master Mayor,
And a score of shipwrights free,
For I think to raise a lantern-tower
On this rock of destiny."

The old Mayor laughed, but sighed also.
"Ah, youth," quoth he, "is rash;
Sooner, young man, thou'lt root it out
From the sea than doth it lash."

"Who sails too near its jagged teeth,
He shall have evil lot;
For the calmest seas that tumble there
Froth like a boiling pot."

"And the heavier seas, few look on nigh,
But straight they lay him dead;
A seventy-gun-ship, sir! they'll shoot
Higher than her mast-head."

"O, beacons sighted in the dark,
They are right welcome things,
And pitch-pots flaming on the shore:
Show fair as angel's wings."

"Hast gold in hand? then light the land,
It 'longs to thee and me;
But let alone the deadly rock
In God Almighty's sea."

Yet said he, "Nay, I must away,
On the rock to set my feet;
My debts are paid, my will I made,
Or ever I did thee greet."

"If I must die, then let me die
By the rock, and not elsewhere;
If I may live, O, let me live
To mount my lighthouse stair."

The old Mayor looked him in the face,
And answered, "Have thy way;
Thy heart is stout, as if round about
It was braced with an iron stay."

"Have thy will, mercer! choose thy men,
Put off from the storm-rid shore;
God with thee be, or I shall see
Thy face and theirs no more."

Heavily plunged the breaking wave,
And foam flew up the lea,
Morning and even' the drifted snow
Fell into the dark-grey sea.

Winstanley choose him men and gear;
He said, "My time I waste,"
For the seas ran seething up the shore,
And the wrack drove on in haste.

But twenty days he waited, and more,
Facing the strand, alone,
Or ever he set his manly foot
On the rock,—the Eddystone.

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